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A study on awareness levels of rural and urban consumers about branded food products

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ABSTRACT

The present paper studies the awareness levels of rural and urban consumers about branded food products because brand awareness is one of the prerequisites for consumers to make buying decisions. Though all of us were living in the digitized world many of the people don't know about the brands and varieties of food products available in the market. The respondents were administered with an interview schedule. The schedule consists of questions related to 13 different food products and their available brands. The study reveals that the majority of the respondents from both rural and urban areas were aware of the food brands like Daawat, India Gate, Aashirvaad, Annapurna, Maggie, Yippie, Five Star, Dairy Milk, Kit-Kat, Britannia 50 - 50, Marie Gold, Achi, MTR, Priya, Freedom, Gold Drop, Gold Winner, Gemini, Taj Mahal, Red Label, Bru, Nescafe, Kissan, Fanta, Real, Jersey, Dodla, Vijaya, etc. About 65.8 per cent of the total respondents had moderate awareness about branded food products followed by 21.7 percent had low awareness and 12.5 were having the high awareness about different food products.

Keywords: *Brands, Awareness, rural, urban, Food products, Consumers.*

Introduction

The Indian food industry is poised for huge growth, and it is increasing its contribution to the world food trade every year. The Indian food and grocery market is ranked the world's sixth largest, with the retail markets contributing to 70 per cent of the sales. In India, the food sector is emerging as a high-growth and high-profit sector due to its immense potential for value addition, particularly in the food processing industry. The food processing industry is one of the largest industries and accounts for 32 percent of India's total food market and is ranked fifth in terms of production, consumption, exports, and expected growth. In India, the probability for investments in the fields of canning, dairy and food processing, specialty processing, packaging, frozen food/ refrigeration, and thermal processing is high, as food production is likely to be raised drastically in the coming 10 years.

A brand can be defined as a set of tangible and intangible attributes designed to create awareness and identity and to build the reputation of a product, service, person, place, or organization. The holistic perspective of branding can be used as a long–term strategy that includes a wide set of activities ranging from product innovation to marketing communications. Consumers should be aware of brands to make better purchasing decisions. It essentially entails consumer awareness of a brand, as well as its information or image. This makes it easier for customers to remember companies and instills trust, satisfaction, and a positive image of the company in their thoughts. This leads to repeat purchases of the same product, as well as a sense of loyalty and commitment to the brand. Brand awareness and image lead to brand understanding, which will assist consumers in future purchases (Howard,1969, [5]). The degree of brand loyalty is also determined by the importance and type of branded products purchased. Thus, the present study was taken up to study the awareness levels of rural and urban consumers about the branded food products.

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Methodology

An exploratory research design was adopted for the present study, to explore the awareness levels of rural and urban consumers about branded food products. A total of 120 respondents were from urban and rural areas of Telangana state. Hyderabad city was selected as the urban area to conduct the study since it is a metropolitan city, and the researcher is very familiar with the location. Under the rural area, Karunapuram and Pedda Pendyal villages from Warangal (Urban) districts were selected for the study. Food products selected for the study were Rice, Noodles, Chocolates, Biscuits, Packaged fruit juices, Tea powder, Coffee powder, Jams and Jellies, Masala powders, Wheat flour, cooking oil, and Milk and Milk products.

The data required for this study was collected using a self-designed structured questionnaire. Statistical tests used were percentages and Frequencies.

Results & Discussion

This current section deals with the findings and discussions on respondents' awareness of different branded food products like rice, wheat flour, tea powder, coffee powder, oil, jams and jelly,

chocolates, noodles, biscuits, milk and milk products, masala powders, packaged fruit drinks, etc.
According to [2], the majority of consumers prefer to buy products/ services that are branded as a brand that represents a symbol of quality. Further, [4] proved that a brand significantly influences purchasing decisions.
[6] conducted a study to indicate the importance of brand awareness in brand choice. The findings of the study reveals that the quality of a product plays a major role in brand choice rather than brand awareness, there was no difference in buying behavior between the cultures.

1. Awareness of different Basmati rice brands

This section deals with the findings related to the respondents' awareness different Basmati rice brands like Daawat, Kohinoor, India Gate, Deevaya, and Heritage. However, people were using locally available raw rice brands like RMR, Srilalitha, Gold Apple, etc.

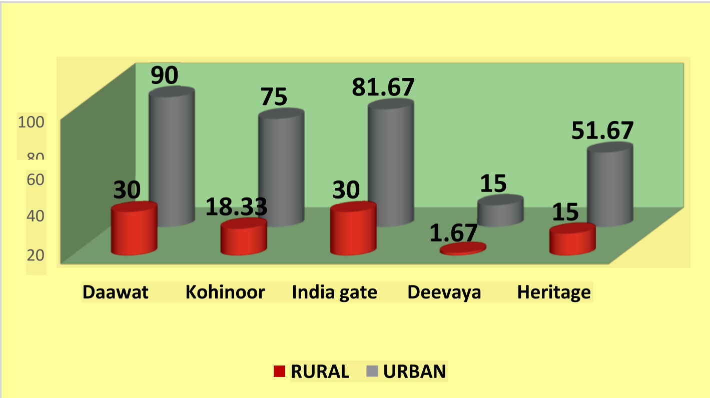

Figure 1. Distribution of the respondents based on the awareness of different Basmati rice

Brands

Results displayed in Figure 1 highlighted that the majority of the rural respondents were unaware of most of the rice brands i.e., Deevaya (98.33%), Heritage (85%), Kohinoor (81.67%), and Daawat and India Gate (70% each). The results were contrasting in the case of urban respondents which means that the majority of the respondents were aware of the rice brands i.e.; 90 percent were aware of Daawat followed by 82 per cent knew about India Gate, 75 per cent knew Kohinoor and 51.67 percent knew about Heritage and the less known brand was Deevaya (15%). The overall results highlighted that Daawat (60%) and India Gate (55.83%) brands were popular brands as expressed by more number of the respondents.
It can be observed that urban respondents had more awareness regarding the branded rice. This is due to their greater exposure to the branded products available in the market and also their preference to buy branded products, with the associated benefits they have. The results of the current study go in line with the study results conducted on Hyderabad city consumers by Jhansi *et al*. (2018) which stated that the majority (64%) of the respondents preferred to buy branded basmati rice and were aware of India Gate (63%) and Daawat (57%) brands.

2. Awareness of different brands of wheat flour

This section deals with the findings and discussions on awareness about different Wheat flour brands like Aashirvaad, Pillsbury, Gold Coin, Patanjali, and Annapurna.

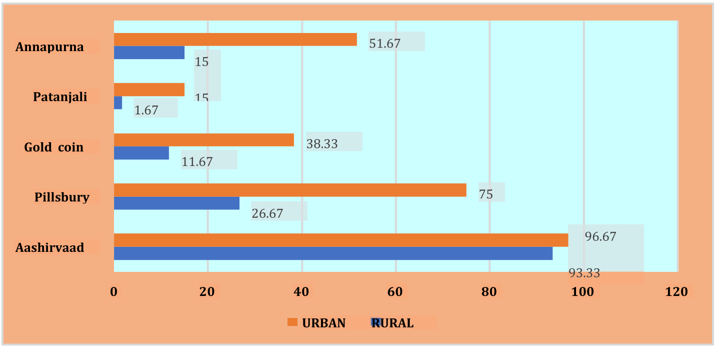

Figure 2. Distribution of the respondents based on the awareness of different wheat flour brands.

Results depicted in figure 2 pointed out that, Aashirvaad was the only wheat flour brand recognized by most of the rural respondents (93.33%) followed by 26.67 per cent being aware of Pillsbury wheat flour brand. The remaining wheat flour brands namely Annapurna (15%), Gold coin (11.67%) and Patanjali (1.67%) were least recognized by rural respondents. In urban areas, Aashirvaad (96.67%) followed by Pillsbury (75%) and Annapurna (51.67%) were more known brands while Gold coin (38.33%) and Patanjali (15%) brands were least recognized by urban respondents. On the whole, 95 per cent were aware of Aashirvaad and Pantanjali (8.33%) was the least recognized brand.

3. Awareness about different brands of tea powder

This section deals with the findings and discussions on awareness about different brands of Tea powders like Taj Mahal, 3 Roses, Gemini, Red label, and Lipton.

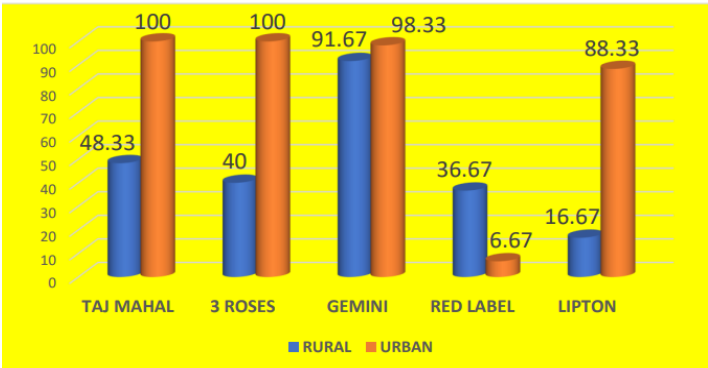

Figure 3. Distribution of the respondents by the awareness about different Tea powder brands

Results of Figure 3. emphasized that Gemini was the only tea powder recognized by m
ost of the rural respondents (91.67%) followed by Taj mahal (48.33%), 3 Roses (40%) and Red label (36.67%) tea powders. Majority of rural respondents (83.3%) were not aware of Lipton tea powder. In urban area, cent per cent of the respondents were aware of the Taj Mahal and 3 roses brands followed by Gemini (98.33%) and Lipton tea (88.33%). While Red Label tea powder was least known by the urban people. The overall results emphasized that Taj Mahal tea powder (74.16%) was well-known among total respondents followed by 3 Roses (70%) and Gemini (53%). Red Label brand was less known (21.67%) by total respondents (Table 3 in Appendix C).

The findings were comparable with a study conducted by Gangadhar and Patil (2017) in Mumbai city on consumer behaviour towards branded tea powders which concluded that

Taj Mahal, 3 Roses, Brooke Bond and Red Label tea powders were focusing largely on the upper-class and middle class of consumers.

4. Awareness about different brands of coffee powder

This section deals with the findings and discussions on awareness about different brands of coffee powders like Bru, Nescafe, Continental, Country Bean, and Davidoff.

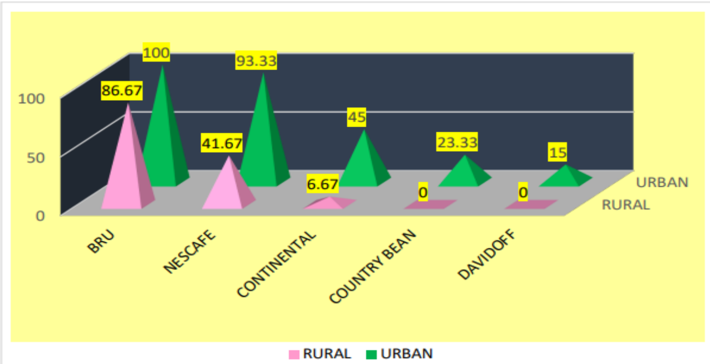

Figure 4. Distribution of the respondents based on the awareness of different powder brands.

Figure 4 indicated that 86.67 percent rural respondents were aware of Bru coffee powder. About 41.6 per cent respondents were aware of Nescafe while Continental coffee powder (6.67%) was least known in rural area and none of the rural respondents were aware of Country bean and Davidoff coffee powders. In urban area, cent per cent of sample were aware of Bru followed by Nescafe coffee powder (93.3%) and 45 percent of respondents were aware of continental coffee powder. About 23.3 per cent knew Country Bean and 15 per cent were aware of Davidoff coffee powder. On the whole, respondents were well aware of Bru (93.3%) followed by (67.5%) Nescafe. Awareness about Continental (25.8%), Country Bean (11.66%) and Davidoff coffee powders (7.5%) was less be because these are little expensive that of other brands.

5. Awareness of different brands of packaged fruit juices

This section deals with the findings and discussions on awareness about different brands of packaged fruit juices like Kissan, Mazaa, Real, Fanta, and Paperboat.

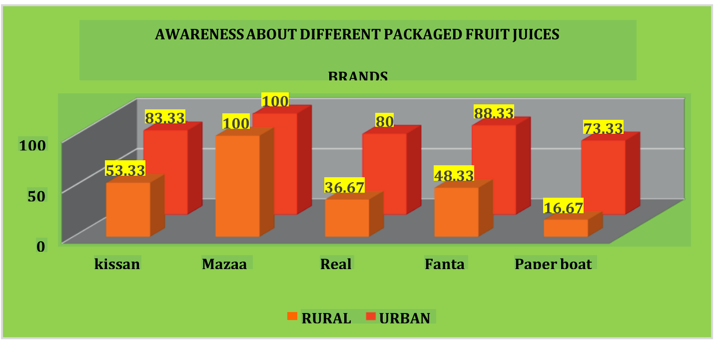

Table 5. Distribution of the respondents based on the awareness about different fruit juice brands.

Figure 5. depicted that Maaza was well known by cent per cent of the rural respondents followed by Kissan brand (53.3%), Fanta (48.3%) and Real fruit juice (36.67%). Very few (16.67%) respondents were aware of Paper Boat fruit juice. In urban areas cent per cent of the respondents were aware of Mazaa, followed by Kissan and Fanta equally (88.3%). Eighty percent knew about Real while 73.33 per cent of respondents were aware of Paper Boat. Overall, Maaza was known by cent per-cent of the respondents followed by Kissan (70.83%), fanta(68.33%), Real juice (58.3%), and Paper boat (45%).

The findings were supported by Agarwal (2020) in a study conducted in Bangalore on consumer perception and attitude towards packaged fruit juice. It revealed that Maaza was preferred by 53.7 per cent of the respondents followed by Tropicana (48.8%) and Real (44.8%).

6. Awareness about different brands of jams and jellies

Data on awareness on different brands of jams and jellies was collected and presented in Figure 6.

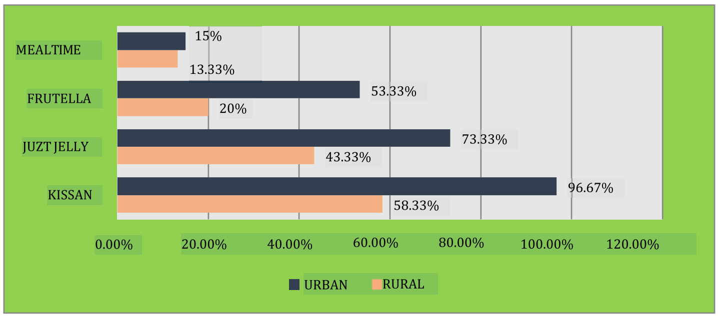

Figure 6. Distribution of the respondents based on the awareness about different jams and jellies brands.

Based on figure 6 it was found that 58.33 per cent of rural respondents were aware of Kissan jams followed by Juzt Jelly (43.3%), Frutella (20%) and very few i.e., 13.33 percent were aware of Meal time jams. In case of urban respondents, Kissan jams and jellies were known by nearly 96.67 percent followed by Juzt Jelly (73.3%), Frutella (53.3%) and very few (15%) respondents were aware of Meal Time jam. On the whole 77.5 per cent of the respondents were aware of Kissan jam followed by 58.3 per cent about Juzt Jelly, 36.6 percent were aware of Frutella and only 14.1per cent of total respondents were aware of Meal Time jams and jellies.

7. Awareness about different brands of masala powders

This section deals with the findings and discussions on awareness about different brands of masala powders like Everest, Priya, Eastern Aachi and MTR.

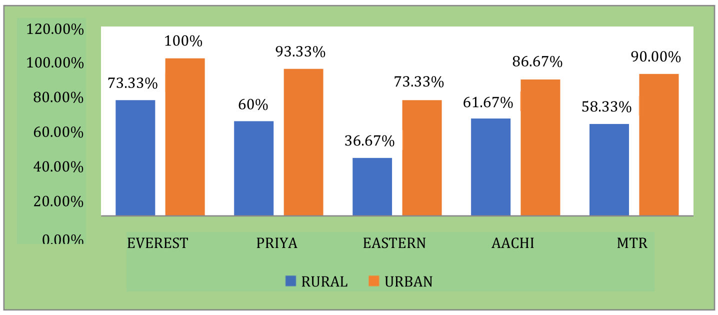

Figure 7. Distribution of the respondents based on the awareness of different masala powders brands.

Figure 7. depicted that Everest masala powder was known to 73.3 per cent of rural respondents followed by Aachi (61.6%), Priya (60%), MTR masala powders (58.3%), and Eastern masala powders (36.67%). In Urban respondents, cent percent respondents were aware of Everest masala powder followed by Priya (93.33%), MTR (90.00%), Aachi(86.67%) and Eastern (73.3%). On the whole, 86.6 percent of total respondents were well aware of Everest masala powders followed by Priya

(76.6%). Aachi and MTR brands were equally known (74.15%) to the respondents. Eastern masala powder (55%) was known by only half of the number of total respondents.

8. Awareness of different cooking oil brands

This section deals with the findings and discussions on awareness about different cooking oil brands like Gold drop, Freedom, Sundrop, Gold winner, and Saffola.

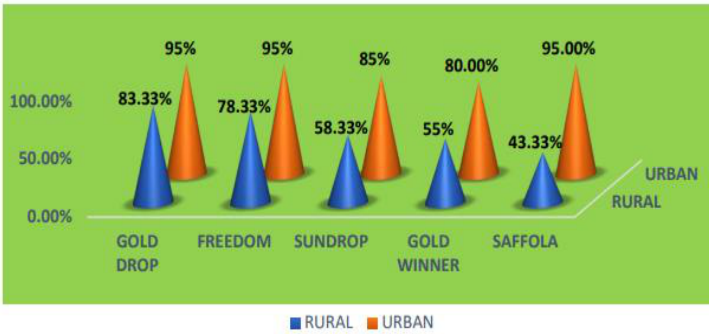

Figure 8. Distribution of the respondents based on the awareness about different cooking oil brands.

Figure 8 depicts that in rural area 83.3 percent of the respondents were aware of Gold Drop oil followed by Freedom oil (78.33%), Sun Drop oil (58.3%), Gold Winner oil (55%) and Saffola oil (43.3%). In urban area 95 per cent of the respondents were aware of Saffola, Gold Drop and Freedom oil brands while 85 per cent were aware of Sundrop and 80 per cent were aware of Gold Winner. Out of the total respondents, 89.1per cent were aware of Gold Drop oil followed by 86.6 per-cent were aware of Freedom oil and 71.66 per cent knew about Sundrop oil. Saffola and Gold winner were known to 69.16 per cent and 67.5 per cent respectively. So compared to rural respondents, urban respondents were more aware of various brands of cooking oils.

9. Awareness about different chips brands

This section deals with the findings and discussions on awareness about different chips brands like Lays, Bingo, Parles, Haldirams and Uncle Chips.

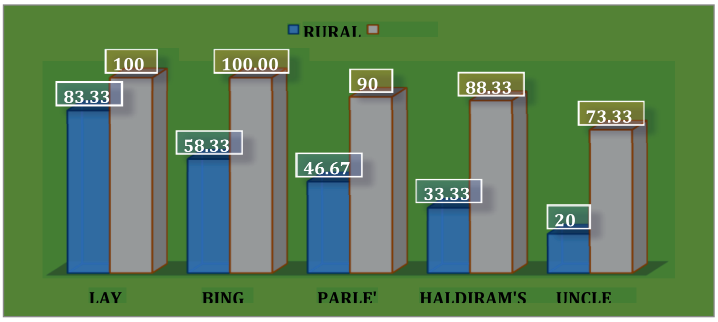

Figure 9. Distribution of the respondents based on the awareness about different chips brands.

Figure 9 emphasized that in rural area 88.3 per cent of the respondents were aware of Lays chips followed by Bingo (58.33%) and Parle's chips (46.67%). While one third of them knew about Haldiram's chips and one fifth of them knew about Uncle Chips. In urban area, cent per cent of respondents were aware of brands namely Lays and Bingo followed by Parle's (90%), Haldiram's (88.33%) and Uncle Chips (73.33%). On the whole, Lays was known by 91.6 per cent of total respondents whereas Uncle chips were known by only 46.6 per cent of the total respondents.

10. Awareness of different brands of biscuits

This section deals with the findings and discussions on awareness about different biscuit brands like Britannia50-50, Oreo, Parle-G, Marigold, Dark Fantasy, Milk Bikkis, and Hide & Seek.

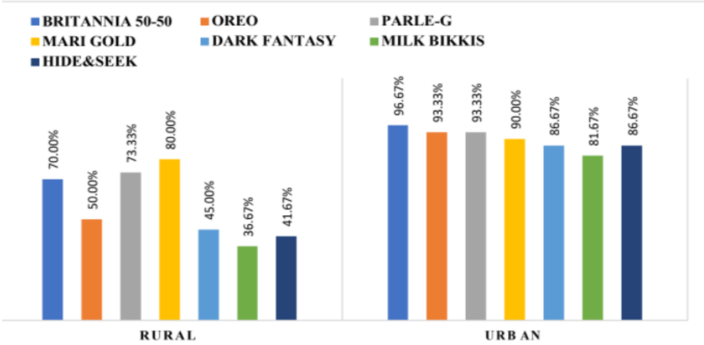

Figure 10. Distribution of the respondents based on the awareness about different biscuits brands

Figure 10 illustrated that in rural area 80 per cent of the respondents were aware of Marie Gold biscuits followed by Parle - G (73.3%) and Britannia 50-50 (70%). Fifty percent of the respondents were aware of Oreo biscuits, while Dark Fantasy, Hide and Seek and Milk Bikkis were known by less than 50 per cent of the respondents.

In urban area, about 96.6 per cent of respondents were aware of Britannia 50-50 biscuits followed by Oreo and Parle - G biscuits (93.3%). While Marie Gold biscuits were known to 90 per cent, Dark Fantasy and Hide and Seek biscuits by 86.67 per cent and Milk Bikkis by 81.67 per cent.

On the whole, Marie Gold biscuits were known by 85 per-cent of total respondents followed by Britannia 50-50 and Parle - G (83.3%) and Milk Bikkis (59.17%) was less known by total respondents.

11. Awareness of different chocolate brands

This section deals with the findings and discussions on awareness about different chocolate brands like Five Star, Dairy Milk, Galaxy, Milky Bar, Kit-Kat, Munch and Perk.

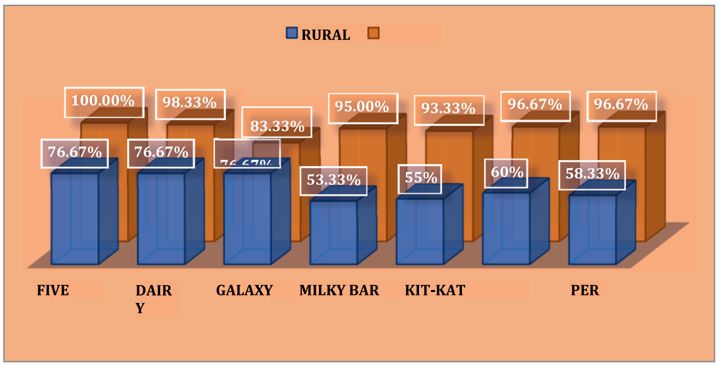

Figure 11. Distribution of the respondents based on the awareness about different chocolates brands.

Figure 11. revealed that in rural areas 76.6 per cent of the respondents were aware of Five Star, Dairy Milk and Galaxy chocolates brands each followed by Munch (60%), Perk (58.33%), Kit-kat (55%) and Milkybar (53.33%). In urban areas, cent per cent of the respondents were aware of five-star chocolates followed by Dairy milk chocolates (98.3%), Munch and Perk by 96.6 per cent each, Milkybar (95%), Kit-kat (93.33%) and Galaxy (83.33%). Out of the total sample

(76.6%). Aachi and MTR brands were equally known (74.15%) to the respondents. Eastern masala powder (55%) was known by only half of the number of total respondents.

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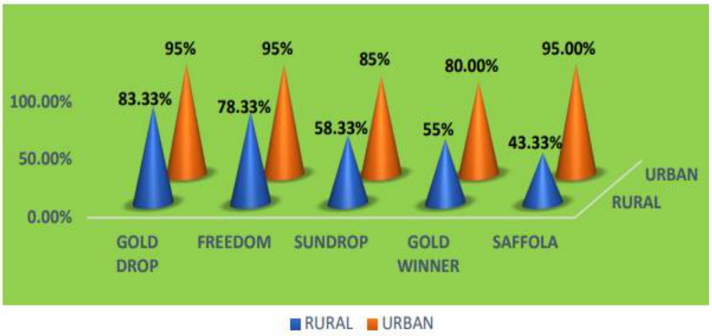

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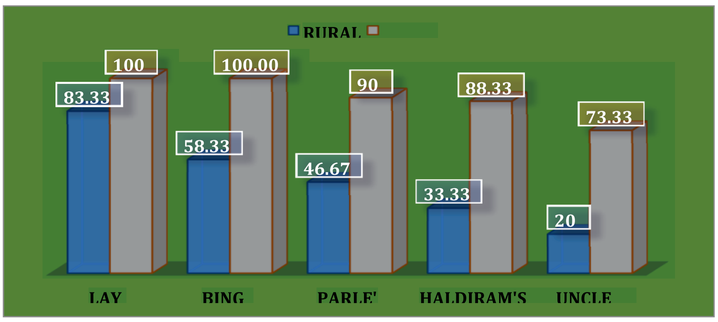

Figure 9. Distribution of the respondents based on the awareness about different chips brands.

Figure 9 emphasized that in rural area 88.3 per cent of the respondents were aware of Lays chips followed by Bingo (58.33%) and Parle's chips (46.67%). While one third of them knew about Haldiram's chips and one fifth of them knew about Uncle Chips. In urban area, cent per cent of respondents were aware of brands namely Lays and Bingo followed by Parle's (90%), Haldiram's (88.33%) and Uncle Chips (73.33%). On the whole, Lays was known by 91.6 per cent of total respondents whereas Uncle chips were known by only 46.6 per cent of the total respondents.

10. Awareness of different brands of biscuits

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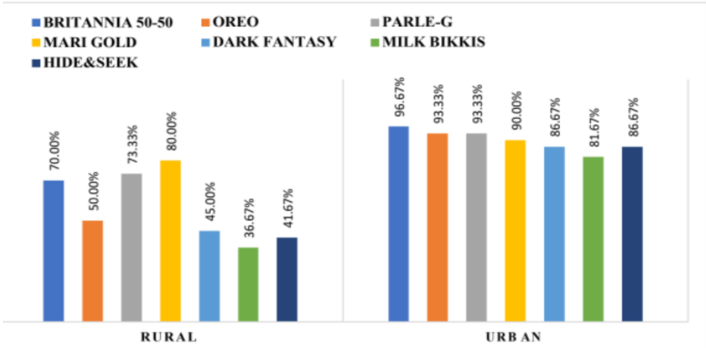

Figure 10. Distribution of the respondents based on the awareness about different biscuits brands

Figure 10 illustrated that in rural area 80 per cent of the respondents were aware of Marie Gold biscuits followed by Parle - G (73.3%) and Britannia 50-50 (70%). Fifty percent of the respondents were aware of Oreo biscuits, while Dark Fantasy, Hide and Seek and Milk Bikkis were known by less than 50 per cent of the respondents.

In urban area, about 96.6 per cent of respondents were aware of Britannia 50-50 biscuits followed by Oreo and Parle - G biscuits (93.3%). While Marie Gold biscuits were known to 90 per cent, Dark Fantasy and Hide and Seek biscuits by 86.67 per cent and Milk Bikkis by 81.67 per cent.

On the whole, Marie Gold biscuits were known by 85 per-cent of total respondents followed by Britannia 50-50 and Parle - G (83.3%) and Milk Bikkis (59.17%) was less known by total respondents.

11. Awareness of different chocolate brands

This section deals with the findings and discussions on awareness about different chocolate brands like Five Star, Dairy Milk, Galaxy, Milky Bar, Kit-Kat, Munch and Perk.

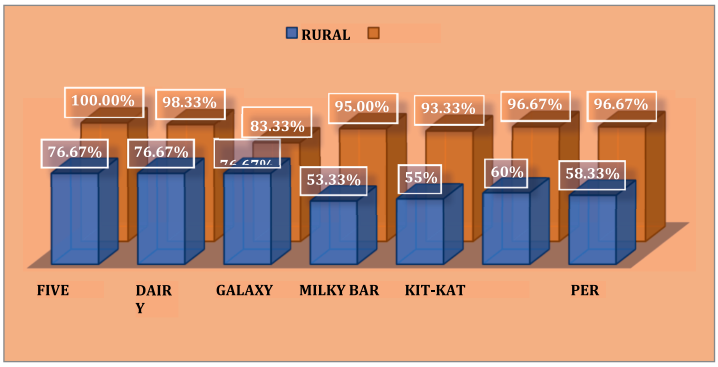

Figure 11. Distribution of the respondents based on the awareness about different chocolates brands.

Figure 11. revealed that in rural areas 76.6 per cent of the respondents were aware of Five Star, Dairy Milk and Galaxy chocolates brands each followed by Munch (60%), Perk (58.33%), Kit-kat (55%) and Milkybar (53.33%). In urban areas, cent per cent of the respondents were aware of five-star chocolates followed by Dairy milk chocolates (98.3%), Munch and Perk by 96.6 per cent each, Milkybar (95%), Kit-kat (93.33%) and Galaxy (83.33%). Out of the total sample

respondent's awareness towards five-star chocolates (88.3%) was high followed by Dairy milk (87.5%), Galaxy chocolates (80.00%), Munch (78.33%), Perk (77.5%) while Milky bar and Kit-kat were comparatively less known by (74.16%) the total sample.

12. Awareness of different brands of noodles

This section deals with the findings and discussions on awareness about different noodle brands like Maggie, Top Ramen, Yippee, Knorr, and Patanjali.

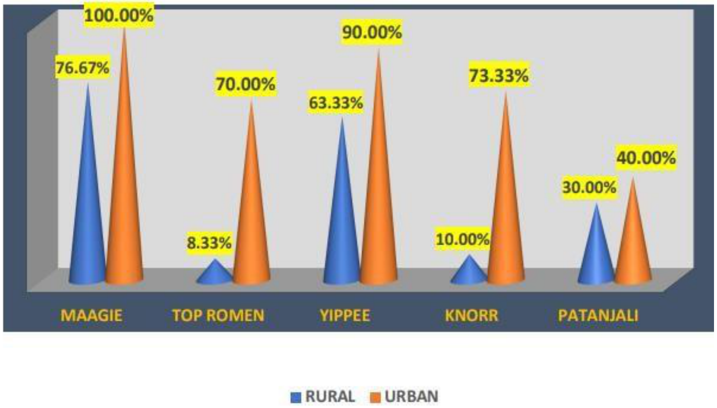

Figure 12. Distribution of the respondents based on the awareness about different noodles brands.

Figure 12 concluded that 76.6 per cent of rural respondents were aware of the Maggie noodles followed by Yippee (63.3%), Patanjali (30%), Knorr (10%) and very few (8.33%) were aware of Top Ramen. In urban area, cent per cent of the respondents were aware of Maggie noodles followed by Yippee noodles (90%), Knorr (73.33%) and Top ramen (70%), Patanjali (40%) brand was less known to the urban respondents. In overall respondents, 88.3 per cent were aware of Maggie followed by Yippee noodles (76.6%) and Knorr noodles (41.6%). Less awareness towards Patanjali (35%) and Top ramen (25.3%) was seen in total respondents.

The results were in consensus with Nagamani *et al.* (2017) in a study conducted in Coimbatore on consumer preference towards instant noodles. It was found that 41.3 per cent of the respondents mostly preferred Yippee followed by Maggie preferred by 39.3 percent of the respondents. About 34.7 per cent of the respondents preferred Home-Made Noodles. About 30 per cent of the respondents preferred Top Ramen and subsequently 26 percent of the respondents preferred Joymee Noodles.

13. Awareness about different brands of milk & milk products

This section deals with the findings and discussions on awareness about different milk & milk product brands like Amul, Dodla, Jersey, Vijaya, Hatsun, Masquati, and Arokya.

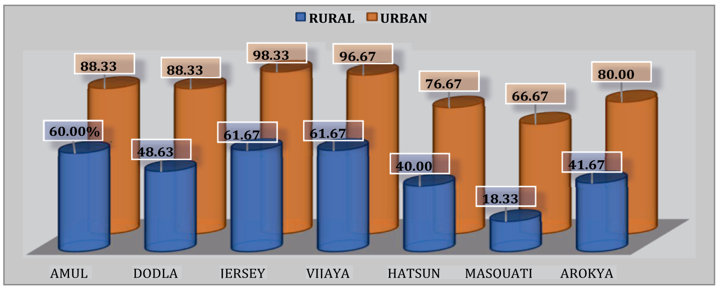

Figure 13. Distribution of the respondents based on the awareness about different milk & milk products brands.

Figure 13 depicted that 61.67 per cent of the rural respondents were aware of both Vijaya and Jersey followed by Amul milk and milk products (60%), Dodla (48.63%), Arokya (41.67%), Hatsun (40%), and Masquati (18.33%). In an urban area, 98.33 per cent of the respondents were aware of Jersey followed by Vijaya milk (96.67%), Dodla and Amul 88.33 per cent each, Arokya milk (80%), Hatsun (76.67%) and Masquati (66.67%). Out of the total respondents, awareness towards Jersey and Vijaya milk was high (80%) followed by amul (74%). Masquati was less known among total respondents (42.5%).

Distribution of respondents by the level of awareness about branded food products

Score	Level of awareness	Rural		Urban		Total	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
Up to 26	Low	26	43.33	-	-	26	21.7
27 – 62	Moderate	32	53.33	47	78.3	79	65.8
Above 63	High	2	3.33	13	21.7	15	12.5

This section deals with the findings and discussion regarding the level of awareness about branded food products. The statistical procedure was done using the total score of the sample to analyse the mean and SD. Level of awareness was categorized into three levels i.e., High, moderate, and low by considering mean and SD values.

The possible awareness score that can be obtained by each respondent ranged between 1 and 70 as 13 food products and 70 brands were selected under the study. However maximum and minimum scores obtained by the sample were 67 and 1 respectively.

The above table revealed that 53.33 per cent of the rural respondents had moderate awareness about the branded food products followed by 43.33 per cent were having low awareness and 3.33 percent were having high awareness. About 78.30 per cent of the urban respondents had moderate awareness about the branded food products followed by 21.70 per cent had high awareness.

About 65.8 per cent of the total respondents had the moderate awareness about the branded food products followed by 21.7 per cent were having low awareness and 12.5 were having the high awareness.

Conclusion

The study reveals that most of the brand's availability in different food products were known by the urban people. They were well aware of the availability of both national and international brands. In the case of rural areas, only few brands were well known even though now a days promotions and advertisements are rapidly seen on the televisions and hoardings. They were having little awareness on the popular brands like Gemini, Dairy milk, yeppiee, saffola, and five-star. In rural areas, most of the respondents were not aware of the milk brands and rice brands as most of the people were using the local products. About 53.33 per cent of the rural respondents were having moderate awareness about the branded food products followed by 43.33 per cent were having low awareness and 3.33 percent were having high awareness. About 78.30 per cent of the urban respondents had moderate awareness about the branded food products followed by 21.70 per cent were having high awareness. So there is a clear disparity in the awareness levels among urban and rural consumers due to the differences in exposure and availability of and accessibility to the stores.

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